

and will be hosted by our own Department of State later this week—not a proud week for strong American values, Mr. Speaker.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CAPTAIN B.B. BRAZILE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute a gentle giant by the name of Captain Brazile, a hero, a man who died in the line of fire, and a man who many of us got to know and love.

He started in the Houston Fire Department at the age of 19, and he was called Baby Boy. That ultimately became B.B. Everyone who came in the distance of his heart and mind said that Captain Brazile was a mentor who taught men and women who were incoming firefighters.

This past weekend, I flew into Houston and was able to go to his bedside on Saturday, to be able to see his family and his wonderful son, who he loves with deep and abiding love, and a wife who loved him without question. All of his fire brothers and sisters were all around. They had the opportunity to pray.

Then, unfortunately, he lost his life. He died in the line of duty, and on Saturday night into early morning on Sunday, I joined a throng of firefighters to proceed in the procession to take his body from the Memorial Hermann Medical Center to the medical examiners.

Mr. Speaker, let me simply say, as we rode through those streets, through the neighborhoods that he fought for and fought fires, saved lives, and passed Fire Station 46 and all of his brothers and sisters, I felt a sense that his spirit had lifted up and that we had honored him by his travel and journey, that we will continue to honor him—Baby Boy, B.B., father, husband, great leader, hero, captain, firefighter—who died in the line of duty.

PROTECT AND EXPAND COLLEGE SAVINGS PLANS

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, it is a question that families all across the country are asking themselves: How can we afford to send our children to college?

The President's plan to tax 529 college savings plans would have punished people who are saving for their children's higher education. Instead of punishing families who are diligently saving for their children's education, we should reward them, we should give them more certainty, and we should strengthen and improve these plans.

529 college savings plans are a very valuable asset for millions of families

who put aside money to help ensure that their children or their child will not be burdened with mountains of debt after they graduate from college.

This week, I will be supporting legislation taken up in the House that will strengthen, that will expand, and that will modernize 529 college savings accounts so that more families have the opportunity to send their children to the higher education institution of their choice.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF SERGEANT MICHAEL STRANK

(Mr. ROTHFUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, 70 years ago yesterday, American Armed Forces fought their way to the summit of Mount Suribachi and raised the American flag on Iwo Jima.

Sergeant Michael Strank, from Franklin Borough, Pennsylvania, was one of six men in this iconic photo who helped to raise the flag. Sergeant Strank was part of the Greatest Generation, a generation that rolled back a dark totalitarian tide that broke upon the world in the first half of the 20th century.

The battle for Iwo Jima was hard-fought and is of great significance for the United States Marine Corps. More than 6,800 servicemen died in the battle, including Sergeant Strank, who was killed just 5 days after the flag was raised.

This unforgettable photo captured the unflinching heroism and determination of those who fought. It reminds us that freedom is not free, that it has been hard-won, and that some—like Michael Strank—have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect it.

I had the privilege to meet members of Sergeant Strank's family this weekend, including his sister Mrs. Mary Pero.

Let us always thank our veterans who served and their families who gave us such heroes.

HONORING WORLD WAR II ICON PRIVATE FIRST CLASS FRANKLIN R. SOUSLEY

(Mr. BARR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a World War II icon, U.S. Marine Private First Class Franklin R. Sousley, of Fleming County, Kentucky.

A graduate of Fleming County High School, Sousley chose to enlist in the Marine Corps where he was assigned to Company E, 2nd Battalion, as a rifleman.

Private First Class Sousley landed on Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945. During the intense fighting, American forces secured Mount Suribachi. Shortly thereafter, Sousley, alongside five

other fellow servicemembers, raised a large U.S. flag, so it could be seen over the island.

An iconic photograph taken during this raising of the U.S. flag led to an immortalized symbol of the American bravery, perseverance, and sacrifice endured by members of the U.S. Armed Forces during the intense battles of World War II.

Sadly, soon after this photograph was taken, Sousley was killed in combat by a Japanese sniper. His remains were laid to rest in the Elizaville Cemetery in Fleming County, Kentucky, in my district.

Private First Class Sousley paid the ultimate sacrifice defending freedom for generations; however, his memory lives on in the timeless photograph in the image depicted in the Iwo Jima Memorial outside of Washington, D.C., and through the gratitude of all Americans.

MIDDLE CLASS ECONOMICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ZELDIN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, about a month and a half ago, we heard the President speak to us about the economy, about his goals for America. He labeled his speech "middle class economics," and tonight, I want to pick this issue up once again.

We are here most every week discussing this issue, although last time we were up here, we took up another important issue, Alzheimer's. But I want to come back to middle class economics, why it is important. Well, basically, it is important because it drives our economy.

The great majority of Americans want to be in the middle class, and most of them are. Unfortunately, we have seen the decline of the middle class, their ability to own a home, a car, to provide for their family—but if the middle class is healthy, it will drive our economy, and it will create jobs, so the focus on the middle class becomes very, very important.

We can do this by strengthening their wages. If they are able to earn more money, then they will buy the home, the car, and the economy will grow, and other people will be able to enjoy the fruits of our economy.

I am going to focus on infrastructure in a moment, but I just want to skip that over and go down to the other things.

Health care—who among us doesn't want to have a good health care program, so that if we get sick or injured, we will be able to get to a doctor, get to a hospital, get the care we need to get back on our feet, and to once again be productive or, in our old age, be able to enjoy our retirement?

So the affordable health care becomes really important, and here, we